



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

City of San Diego  
Planning & Development Review  
**Building Development Review**  
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# Building Newsletter 2-1

## Definition of Grade

Interpretations of State and Local Building Codes  
1998 California Building Code: Chapter 2  
Revision Date: July 1999

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### I. Definition of Grade

Section 208 of the Building Code defines grade as "the lowest point of elevation of the finished surface of the ground, paving or sidewalk within the area between the building and the property line or, when the property line is more than 5 feet from the building, between the building and a line 5 feet from the building."

### II. Grade After Retaining Wall Installation

Where finish grade is established by the installation of a retaining wall on the property line, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- A. When the property line is located 5 feet or less from the building, see Figure 1.
- B. When the property line is located more than 5 feet from the building, see Figure 2.
- C. When the building is cantilevered and the property line is located 5 feet or less from the cantilevered portion, see Figure 3.
- D. When the building is cantilevered and the property line is located more than 5 feet from the cantilevered portion, see Figure 4.

Figure 1

Grade shall be the lowest point on the high side of the wall if X is equal to 5 feet.

Grade shall be the elevation of the finished surface on the low side of the wall if X is less than 5 feet.

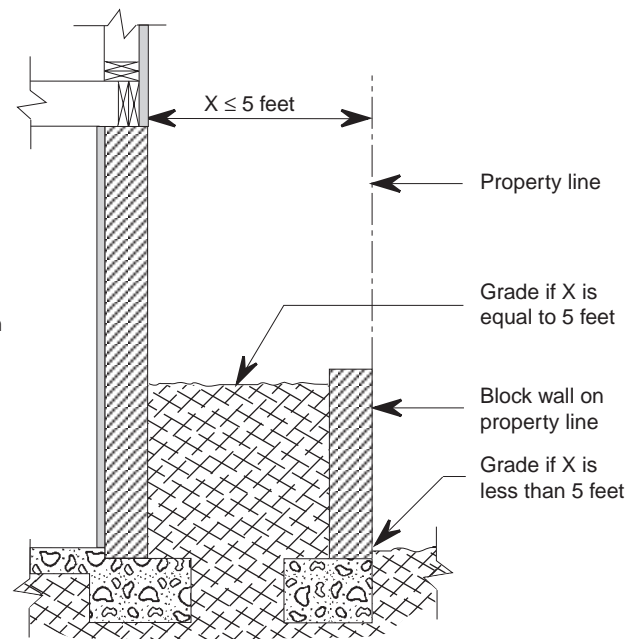
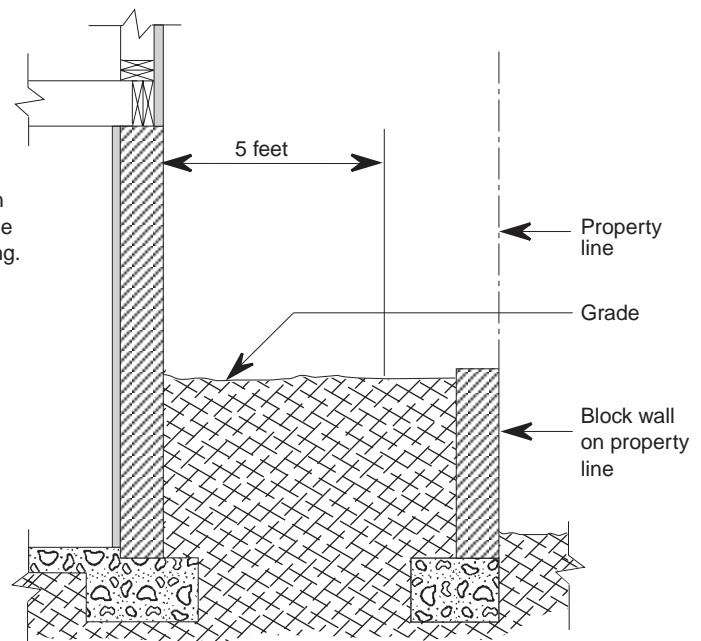
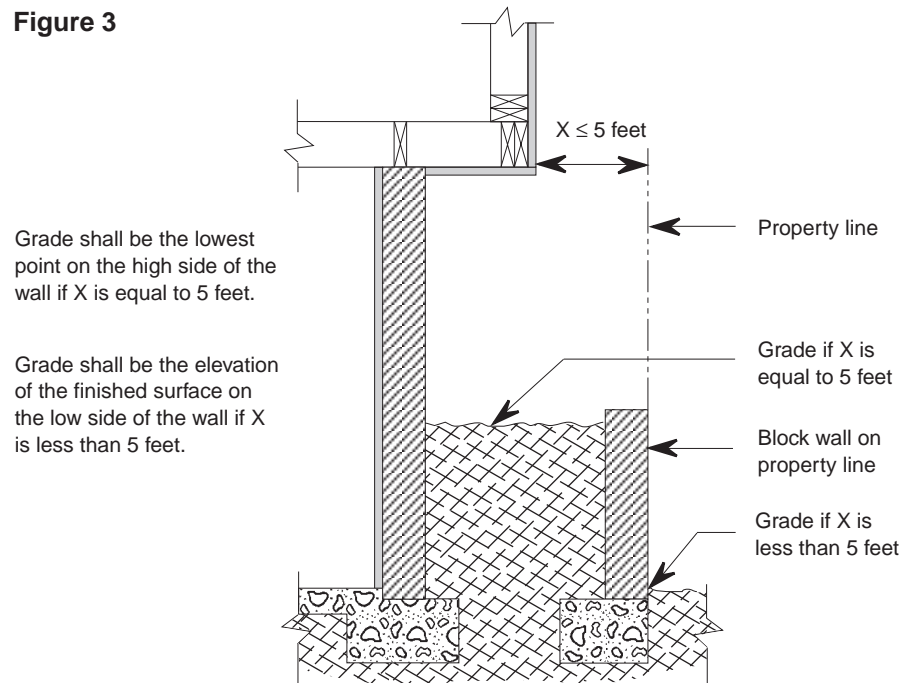


Figure 2

Grade shall be the lowest point between the building and a line 5 feet from the building.



**Figure 3****Figure 4**